

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
WASTEWATER ALTERNATIVES COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 7th, 2024 MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Holly Delisle (Town Administrator), Carol Winfield, Lori Johnson, Max Tyler (Planning Commission), Martha Heath, Jeremy Berger, Pat Haller (Selectboard), Ron Rodjenski (Stone Shore Environmental)

**Members Absent:** *None*

**Also Present:** *None*

**Meeting Began:** 3:04pm

**R. Rodjenski** introduced the overview intro of WAC.

**Public Comment/Items Not on Agenda:** **R. Rodjenski** recommended an adjustment to the agendas to list properties that have been proposed. *This prompted a lengthy discussion, see below under discussion.\**

**Review and Approve Minutes of 9/24/2024:**

There was discussion regarding the minutes.

**C. Winfield** and others were concerned that there were comments made that were not included in the minutes to counterbalance an opinion stated by another member.

**H. Delisle** will go back to look at the minutes and recording and include some of the comments made before the next meeting.

**M. Tyler** points out a spelling error that needs to be changed as well.

**C. Winfield** reminded the committee that when posting on Front Porch Forum should be prefaced by “this is my personal opinion” when not speaking for the committee. We should also be differentiating opinion vs fact in minutes as well.

**M. Heath** suggested that people can attribute comments to specific people, but if there is consensus, we can make it clear that “there was a consensus...” on items that have full committee agreement.

**P. Haller** stated that people can express their opinion during meetings, and we need to have an open dialogue. We can check the people that we disagree with on the spot to ensure that we are reflecting the conversation accurately.

**L. Johnson** agrees that we should be able to speak, but it is most important that all comments are recorded. She would prefer not to approve the minutes until the amended minutes are presented to the committee.

**Discussion:**

*Items Not on the Agenda Continued\**

**R. Rodjenski** thinks there should be a limit to what we should research based on location. We have a list of property owners that are interested in being reviewed. This culminated with the need to have an access permission slip. How do we track this and have something easy to show when

someone asks where we are at. It seems that we only have one or two parcels to access right now. How many properties do we have that we can add to the list at this point?

**H. Delisle** thinks matrix documents for people to follow along with. She thinks it's a lot to digest and understand, **H. Delisle** agrees that having something on the agenda that makes it clear where we are would be a good idea.

**M. Heath** thinks a spreadsheet that shows the suggested location and status would be good. She doesn't think that there was anything we said we wouldn't pursue but agrees that there aren't many properties that we've gotten permission to explore.

**H. Delisle** discusses the Common Hall not having signed a permission slip yet and Paul Birnholz being interested but not having signed one yet either.

**P. Haller** asks whether we have directly asked individuals for their interest.

**H. Delisle** says we have not yet asked specific residents if they are interested.

**M. Heath** stated that we should already know where there is capacity because of Stone Environmental's work.

**C. Winfield** suggested that the Fleury property may have something available, but we haven't asked them directly.

**R. Rodjenski** thinks we should make this list so we can prioritize and work through. Should we put another notice out to see if there is anyone new that would like to be considered?

**M. Tyler** wanted to know what the parameters for properties we would look at, like a radius. Is there a list of properties within a certain radius and do they meet criteria?

**R. Rodjenski** agrees and discusses how we already know that within half a mile of the Town Center is Maple Shade, so maybe we should limit it to a mile and a half away? **H. Delisle** could do outreach based on the criteria that the committee decides on then send letters to the people in that radius.

**L. Johnson** recommended the RBMH. **H. Delisle** states we haven't discussed it with them currently.

**M. Heath** thinks it's worthwhile to send individual letters and it would be important to be clear that we aren't necessarily looking for a single property to solve the whole problem.

**P. Haller** suggests that maybe instead of a half mile radius, we could choose the area which Maple Shade would have served.

**R. Rodjenski** suggests that on the next agenda we work on a draft letter and a map of the radius and identify how many properties would get the letter. Also, a historical record of properties that we keep as a running tally of sites.

**M. Heath** would like to see the cost per foot or yard depending on how far we go away from the center of town.

**P. Haller** thinks we could get a rough number based on Stone Environmental and Green Mountain Engineering data.

**M. Tyler** agrees that that would be a good idea, but it will vary a lot depending on the geography that we're passing through. **M. Tyler** suggested including Cambridge Rd.

**M. Heath** mentioned that the Town Garage property would be a good one to research. **C. Winfield** agrees that we should prioritize and investigate there.

**J. Berger** thinks the service area of Maple Shade was constrained because of the Zoning limits; he thinks we should add a half mile to that area.

**Review work completed to date & assign tasks**

**H. Delisle** updated the group that David Tudhope is reporting back about current need for the town office and library

**L. Johnson** found that the Town Office's well has an output of 15gpm.

**M. Heath** shares the question she had for Holly; Are there any recent water quality reports? There was one done for the library in 2023, she thinks it could be shared with the whole committee. The main concern was lead and they believe it could be from the pipe and not the groundwater.

**P. Haller** clarified that a 15gpm well could serve a 490gpd septic need very quickly; in roughly 30 minutes.

**R. Rodjenski** noticed that the 9/24 minutes say an agreement to look at the Common Hall has been drawn up and would like to know what that means.

**H. Delisle** says it means the access permission slip that the town attorney reviewed was updated but hasn't been sent to property owners yet.

**L. Johnson** would like to adjust the section regarding disturbances for the WCH property because it was decided that the determination of capacity would require a backhoe, and trees would need to be cut.

**M. Tyler** suggested having a 2-stage agreement to address Lori's concern.

**R. Rodjenski** stated that permission slips generally set out the extent of any damage and any landowner is going to want to be involved. The current permission slip is a template. We could say, "Any disturbance shall be returned to the satisfaction of the owner at the Town's expense."

**J. Berger** mentioned that the ownership of the data doesn't make it clear who gives that permission to release.

**R. Rodjenski** stated that there is a time when information will become public at a certain point – usually when it's finished.

**L. Johnson** recalled that the reason we added that was to protect the Town from a landowner taking the information for free for their own use.

**P. Haller** thinks the information does not belong to the property owner until it becomes public information.

**R. Rodjenski** discusses there being a legal issue because the Town is paying for data collection. The town would be the owner if they pursued the project. The landowner does not have access to the engineer until it's turned over to the landowner.

**L. Johnson** offered to go to the RBMH to discuss.

**P. Haller** would like to know who is willing to go to Paul Birnholz and who will go to WCH?

**M. Heath** would like more information about the Birnholz property before we move forward with it. She would like to talk about where the soils are and if we think it's viable to run pipes to that location. She thinks it may be extensive. **M. Heath** recalls that she already spoke with the WCH, and they are just waiting for the permission slip.

**R. Rodjenski** suggested that the Selectboard wants WAC to investigate the Town Garage property. They should have some affirmative action at a board meeting to allow.

**J. Berger** asked if anyone had reached out to Paul regarding what he thinks his plans may be.

**M. Heath** says he showed them a small section of soil on his property on a map.

*It's the consensus of the committee that Pat will ask the Selectboard about their feelings about investigating the Town Garage, Lori will reach out to RBMHS.*

**Task assignments:**

- Holly will share the Library Water Test Results with the committee.
- Holly and Ron will work on a delineation of criteria and spreadsheet for tracking.
- Holly will wordsmith the landowner access permission regarding disturbance. Add "by the Town" to the public information section.
- Lori has volunteered to reach out to the RBMH.
- Pat will bring this to the Selectboard to decide whether they would be interested in us investigating the Town Garage property.
- Holly will keep the SB in the loop that WAC will be doing outreach/letters in November/December.

***Meeting Adjourned: 4:09pm***